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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/731,878	12/08/2003	Robin Peng	3051-6244US	6708

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EXAMINER

ELLIS, SUEZU Y

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2878

DATE MAILED: 05/17/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/731,878

Applicant(s)

PENG ET AL.

Examiner

Suezu Ellis

Art Unit

2878

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 May 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 21 May 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Regarding claims 1 and 10, the phrases "substantially" and "an appropriate switching motion" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2173.05(d).

Regarding claim 5, the phrase "an appropriate switching motion" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2173.05(d). Further, line 3 recites "the appropriate switching motion is effected within about six inches of the motion detector element". It is unclear as to what "is effected" means. Please clarify. For examining purposes, "is effected" will be considered as "occurs", where the motion occurs within about six inches of the motion detection element.

Claim 15 is poorly written and confusing. Line 4 recites "timing the switching motion". It is unclear how the timing of the switching motion is performed. Does the

Art Unit: 2878

applicant mean to time the amount of time the object moves in a switching motion or to time the amount of time the switching element takes to switch from one state to another or to time the amount of time to trigger the switching element? Further, the phrase "is effected in a direction that corresponds to a change in the state of the electrical circuit", recited in lines 7 and 10, is unclear. Is the phrase "is effected" the same as "occurs"? Further it is unclear as to what the "direction that corresponds to a change in the state of the electrical circuit" means. How does a direction correspond to the change in a state of the electrical circuit? Please clarify. The scope of claim 15 is so unclear that the metes and bounds of the claim cannot be determined, thus claims 15-20 will not be further treated on the merits.

Claim 17 is confusing. The phrase "the switching motion is effected" is unclear. Further it is recited twice. This seems redundant. Please reword.

Claims not specifically addressed are indefinite due to their dependency on an indefinite claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Walthall et al. (US 4,305,006). Hereafter, Walthall et al. will be referred to as Walthall.

With respect to claim 1, Walthall discloses a hands-free electrical switch (on-off switch) comprising an electronic switching element (on-off circuitry) and a motion detection element configured to sense a switching motion that causes the electronic switching element to switch between a first state (on) and a second state (off) (col. 1, lines 9-25).

With respect to claims 2-4, Walthall discloses in Fig. 8, the motion detection element includes two emitters (D1, D1') and a detector (Q2), wherein the emitters are in vertical alignment with one another and the detector is positioned between the two emitters.

With respect to claims 6-8, Walthall discloses two visible position indicators (D4, D5) where each indicator is an LED that produces red and green colors.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walthall et al. (US 4,305,006). Hereafter, Walthall et al. will be referred to as Walthall.

With respect to claim 5, Walthall addresses all the limitations of claim 1. Further, Walthall discloses that to trigger the on-off circuitry, the motion detection unit senses the motion preferably less than six inches (col. 9, lines 18-29). It would have been an obvious design choice to modify the distance in order to ensure that the switch will not be actuated unless a person intentionally does so.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walthall et al. (US 4,305,006) in view of Lang (US 5,977,878). Hereafter, Walthall et al. will be referred to as Walthall.

With respect to claim 9, Walthall addresses all the limitations of claim 1, however, fails to expressly disclose an audio element configured to output an audible signal when the switching motion is detected. Walthall and Lang are directed to a similar field of endeavor of non-contact switches. Lang discloses the inclusion of an audible sound as an indicator of when the switch changes states (col. 4, lines 5-7). Note the change of states occurs after switching motion is detected by the detector. It would have been an obvious design choice for a person of ordinary skill in the art to include an audible signal when the switching motion is detected, as another means of an indicator, in order to let the user know when the switch has changed states.

Claims 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walthall et al. (US 4,305,006) in view of Endruschat et al. (US 5,594,238). Hereafter,

Walthall et al. and Endruschat et al. will be referred to as Walthall and Endruschat respectively.

With respect to claims 10, 11 and 13, Walthall discloses in Fig. 8, an on-off switch comprising a pair of aligned emitters (D1, D1') that emit infrared radiation, a detector (Q2), located between the emitters, to detect the infrared radiation from the emitters (col. 2, lines 40-44), and an electronic switching element (on-off circuitry) (col. 1, lines 8-25). Walthall further discloses the on-off circuitry is coupled to a triac (col. 3, lines 8-15, 64-66; col. 4, lines 20-23). Walthall further discloses the switch comprising two LED indicators that produce red and green colors (col. 3, lines 28-33). Walthall fails to expressly disclose a processor which controls the emitters and the emitters and electronic switching element are in communication with. Walthall and Endruschat are directed to a similar field of endeavor of touchless switches. Endruschat discloses a processor that controls the emitter and that interprets the presence of an object so that a toggle operation is initiated to toggle the switch (col. 4, lines 13-16, 42-44).

Endruschat fails to expressly disclose the electronic switching element, however, in order to initiate toggling of the switch, there must be an electronic switching element which is in communication with the processor. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to include a processor in order to monitor the detector and control the emitters.

With respect to claim 12, the modified Walthall addresses all the limitations of claim 10. Further, the modified Walthall discloses that to trigger the on-off circuitry, the motion detection unit senses the motion preferably less than six inches (col. 9, lines 18-

29). It would have been an obvious design choice to modify the distance in order to ensure that the switch will not be actuated unless a person intentionally does so.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walthall et al. (US 4,305,006) in view of in view of Endruschat et al. (US 5,594,238), and further in view of Lang (US 5,977,878). Hereafter, Walthall et al. and Endruschat et al. will be referred to as Walthall and Endruschat respectively.

With respect to claim 14, the modified Walthall addresses all the limitations of claim 10, however, fails to expressly disclose an audio element configured to output an audible signal when the switching motion is detected. Lang discloses the inclusion of an audible sound as an indicator of when the switch changes states (col. 4, lines 5-7). Note the change of states occurs after switching motion is detected by the detector. It would have been an obvious design choice for a person of ordinary skill in the art to include an audible signal when the switching motion is detected, as another means of an indicator, in order to let the user know when the switch has changed states.

Telephone/Fax Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Suez Ellis whose telephone number is 571-272-2868. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30am-7pm (Monday-Thursday).

Art Unit: 2878

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Dave Porta can be reached on 571-272-2444. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Stephone B. Allen
Primary Examiner